

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

Intelligence Community Staff

IC 75-1439

11 APR 1975

Vice Admiral E. F. Rectanus, USN
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
(Resources and Management)
Room 3C200, The Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Rex:

Thank you for your comments and your kind words concerning our "Review of National Intelligence." With your permission, I would like to publish your letter and your staff's comments (or at least portions thereof) in the next issue of the publication. (And I will assume that I have that permission unless I hear to the contrary.)

The first issue of RONI stimulated the beginnings of what I hope will be a healthy and continuing exchange on many aspects of the community's production effort.

As you might expect, we have received a variety of comments on the RONI from our readers, both orally and in writing. Some, for example, welcomed the style of writing while others emphatically did not. Others, apparently unaware of the IC Staff's structure and charter, in effect accused us of being CIA reviewers praising CIA products. (It is interesting to note in this regard that over one-half of our regular reviewers are active or retired military officers.)

For our part, we are open to any and all suggestions for shaping future editions of the RONI. We are still looking into many of the issues your staff addressed in its comments--e.g., the range of products reviewed, the usefulness of statistics, and the need for a better perception of the intelligence users' needs. As we gain reviewing experience and put into practice some of the suggestions of our intelligence colleagues, RONI will, I think, improve.

Sincerely,

/s/ Samuel V. Wilson

Samuel V. Wilson
Lieutenant General, USA
Deputy to the DCI for the
Intelligence Community

Distribution:

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1 - General Wilson

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Informal Comments on First IC
Review of National Intelligence

A. Scope of Review (p. A)

- o No indication is given of the scope of review activity beyond the DIN, NIB and NID.

- o Only 668 of 2196 DIN, NIB and NID articles surveyed had significant relevance to the KIQs. A total of 1,471 had significant or "peripheral" interest. But, "significant" and "peripheral" are never defined.

- o Only 110 of 2,196 articles impacted on strategic forces. There is no indication as to whether this is important.

B. Comments on Highlights

- o Combining NIB and NID (p. 4) seems an excellent idea.

- o Self-praise keeps bursting out -- "awesome", "remarkable", etc. -- in the midst of baroque prose. Needs much tighter editing, and a less florid style. Surely the production community can stand critical comment put simply and candidly, without the use of these insulative devices.

- o Does not identify reviewers or experience (p. 6). The reviewer seems to be an intelligence officer speculating on user views, not a user.

- o Summary of topical analysis is very weak (p. 11). So is that of source analysis (p. 12) and of relationship of reporting to KIQs (p. 13). Badly need to define terms, and improve depth of analysis to reflect work done in pp. 19-48. A sample format for doing this is attached; more are needed.

- o Prose is too cute, again perhaps as an insulative device. For example, KIQs are "voracious and promiscuous" ("I get a KIQ out of your?" (p. 13).

- o "Special prizes" for bad writing are humorous, but may be an awkward insertion into a serious report (p. 14).

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- o Too little attention is paid to the user's problem in retaining and cross referencing good items in the NIB, NID and DIN. The reviewers' attitude seems to be that if it is good when it goes out, it's all right. Far too little attention is paid to how efficiently the material gets to the user, his ability to assemble the bits and pieces, and the difficulty many staff level users have in retaining material placed in code word reports.

- o The detailed reviews of topic areas are not user oriented.

- o Very little or no attention is paid to the quality of quantitative analysis or to the reporting on uncertainty. The whole style of product evaluation is more journalistic than analytic.

- o Only very limited attention is paid to changes or problems in the methodology of intelligence analysis.

C. Special Studies and Commentaries

- o Section on Cyprus. Post-Mortem consists of value judgements where an analytic chronology is clearly required.

D. Staff Study

- o Glosses over survey of 130-400 "periodicals." A better summary and listing would be very useful. This is a very weak effort at review.

- o Would be useful for NSCIC working group to see list of these periodicals which the community publishes. Should ask users about their value as well as USIB.

E. Special Article (Estimates of Strategic Systems)

- o A footnote on page 50 is the only instance in the paper where the reviewers' background is explained. It should be given for every review presented.

- o Page 51 shows that broad trends occurred in the IC estimates of Soviet ICBMs.

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